

ROCK CLIMBING ON LUNDY

BY EDWARD C. PYATT

Though mountaineers have been climbing on the cliffs of Western Cornwall for more than fifty years, the systematic exploration of the rocks of the West Country only began about five years ago. A peep at Lundy during a day trip last year encouraged us to return this June for a thorough investigation and to attempt climbs on the apparently promising crags. The final party, organized by Rear Admiral K. M. Lawder, consisted of himself, Commander P. B. Lawder, Captain C. E. Keys and Messrs J. Logan, E. C. Pyatt and R. Shaw. We are grateful to Mr A. P. Harman and to the Lundy Field Society who, with the co-operation of the weather, helped us to make a great success of this venture.

The chief aim of the mountaineer is the ascent of new, untrodden summits. He accomplishes it, first by the easiest route, then progressively by harder ways as his proficiency advances. In Britain where the mountains themselves present no problems, steep crags on the mountain sides are made to yield rock climbs, which become of progressively harder standards as one generation succeeds another.

The aims of the cliff climber are similar and twofold. He tries first to climb all the isolated rock masses or pinnacles—the untrodden summits of the mountaineer, and second to make rock climbs on steep cliffs similar to those on mountain crags. Pinnacles can be divided into three groups: cliff pinnacles, above high water mark; beach pinnacles, between high and low water marks; sea pinnacles (islands), below low water mark. Frequently the problem of ascent is one of access rather than of technique; sea pinnacles have obviously to be approached by boat or by swimming, beach pinnacles need routes down the cliffs and close attention to the tide, and so on. The climbing crags, too, present problems of access. Ideally there should be an easy way down the cliff and a traverse just above the sea to the foot of the climb. It is seldom this easy; in practice the traverse may be long and arduous, while in the extreme rope ladder or boats may be needed before a start can be made on the rocks.

Let us see how these principles apply on Lundy. The granite crags are familiarly similar to those of Western Cornwall. In addition there are a few few walls and faces reminiscent of Dartmoor tors with rounded ledges, few holds and offering very little to the climber. In places the rocks are studded with sharp crystals—sharper than anything in our experience—cuts on the hands were easily and casually acquired. Our equipment was normal—plimsolls or rubber-soled boots, breeches or shorts with knee pads, ropes, etc. Some pitons were used for belays and one, at least for direct aid. The climbs mentioned below should only be attempted by expert climbers, properly shod and roped.

Cliff Pinnacles

The Constable Rock was climbed by J. Logan and R. Shaw by a very hard route on the landward face (2 pitons).

Great Shutter Rock was not attempted. We understand that it has been climbed; the only barrier appears to be the poor quality material which has to be crossed to reach it.

The Cheeses. Some were climbed on their short sides. The long sides look like Dartmoor tors and very hard.



from a photograph by E. G. Pyatt

Beach Pinnacles

Goat Island was easily climbed on its north face. There are other pinnacles to the south.

Needle Rock was led by K. M. Lawder—a climb of difficult standard on the seaward face. Access down the main cliff is by a gully immediately to the south.

Devil's Chimney was climbed by J. Logan and R. Shaw, starting on the west face and finishing on the north (3 pitons). Access down the main cliff is by an intricate route between here and the Needle.

Gannet Rock was not attempted and looks hard.

Rat Island was not attempted but looks straightforward.



Sea Pinnacles

Off the headland north of Devil's Slide Cove is an island which was not attempted. It may even be a beach pinnacle, but we do not think so.

Climbers' Crag

Goat Island offers promising prospects in its south face. A little climbing was done there.

Cliffs behind the Devil's Chimney. There appears to be some straightforward climbs between here and the Needle. Great optimism can also detect a route on the very steep cliff wall to the east.

The Headland south of St James's Stone presents a good prospect on the seaward face.

St James's Stone. Two climbs were made on the north face. There are further possibilities at the seaward end and nearby on the main cliff.

Devil's Slide. The foot has only been reached so far with the aid of a rope. K. M. Lawder led the first ascent from sea level to cliff top, finding the upper part particularly difficult where a traverse leftwards has to be made on very sketchy holds (which incidentally,

the goats use when they cross). This is the longest climb in the West Country—around 400 feet—longer certainly than the Wrecker's Slab at Yeol Mouth, north of Morwenstow, climbed in 1959.

Devil's Slide Cove. The cliff immediately north of the Slide is a good hard prospect and there are others also farther round.

Gannet Rock Crag—the main cliff behind Gannet Rock. A very hard climb (1 piton) was made here by J. Logan and R. Shaw. Other lines are possible. The foot is easily reached from the north.

Farther south there are some possibilities around the Knight Templar, but there does not seem to be any worthwhile climbing anywhere south of Logan Rock on either the east or south coasts of the Island.

We feel that Lundy is a very important climbing discovery. Even though the most spectacular pinnacles have all been climbed, a great deal remains to be done. We shall hope to return and others will want to follow when they hear about it. No one is likely to be disappointed with what they find.

VISITING MEMBERS STAYING AT THE OLD LIGHT

J. Coleman Cooke	April 11th to 21st
Conservation Corps	April 11th to 21st
A. G. Gulliford	May 18th to 25th
J. M. A. Crowcombe	May 30th to June 3rd
P. B. Lawdon	June 3rd to 7th
E. C. Pyatt	June 3rd to 8th
B. Lumsdon	June 9th to 10th
K. M. Lawder	June 3rd to 10th
C. E. Keys	June 3rd to 10th
J. D. King	June 13th to 21st
J. C. A. Dyke	June 20th also in August
A. B. Hawley	June 13th to 21st
R. L. D. Pearce	June 13th to 21st
H. A. H. Van Spreekens	June 20th to 28th
K. J. A. Van Spreekens	June 20th to 28th
D. Wicks	June 15th to 29th, July 22nd to 31st
S. Fletcher	July 29th to 31st
D. A. Rowes	July 28th to 31st
Miss Betty Moore	August 9th to 22nd
T. Stocks	August 19th to 24th
D. B. Iles	August 24th to September 19th
A. J. Vickery	September 19th to October 1st

M. McCallum Webster and C. M. A. Cadell were on Lundy on June 3rd and 4th, and confirmed many previous records of flowering plants on the Island.